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Residents come together for natural cul-de-sac maintenance

THE WOODLANDS, TEXAS (July 2, 2014) – One of the unique master plan design features of The Woodlands is the neighborhood cul-de-sac. This land plan design is intended to maximize green space, limit traffic, contribute to public safety and to provide opportunities for neighbors to get to know each other.

More than 1,300 cul-de-sac islands currently exist in The Woodlands with a projection of approximately 1,400 at build-out. Cul-de-sac islands that are larger than 3,400 square feet (jumbos) are minimally maintained by The Woodlands Township 11 times a year, which includes mowing, trimming, blowing and trash pick-up. Islands smaller than 3,400 square feet, which are within the county road right-of-way, are not maintained by the Township but often maintained by the residents around the island, if they so choose.

Generally once all homes have been built on a street, the cul-de-sac island will still have its natural forest floor, trees and shrubs that were native there and a grassy edge to help prevent erosion. This type of cul-de-sac is easy to maintain and has its hardy native trees and shrubs still in place. Little pruning or weeding is required, and the native growth thrives to soften the streetscape and absorb the heat and sound.

Thirsty seasonal flowering plants, manicured shrubs, and other high maintenance landscaping elements are generally not planted in cul-de-sac islands because they may look nice at first, but detract quickly from a neighborhood if they are not maintained. It should be noted that an unobtrusive, passive, approach to cul-de-sac maintenance has served the test of time in most neighborhoods.

As for hardscaping, such as a decomposed granite pad or stone pad with a small bench, projects such as these can be approved by The Woodlands Township, but elaborate projects are discouraged. Play structures and basketball goals are not permitted for safety and aesthetic reasons.

In many of the villages, neighbors organize themselves to care for the cul-de-sac as a natural outgrowth of a sense of community. Some neighbors have a special interest or expertise in landscape. Some have a knack for leading, and soon the group is taking turns mowing the grass, trimming the trees, or running a hose out to water the trees and shrubs during a dry spell. Some may contract with a landscaping company for the maintenance.

Cul-de-sacs both small and jumbo serve a number of purposes in the community, which in part makes The Woodlands a special place. If the cul-de-sacs are allowed to grow and mature into the forested island concept, minimal maintenance is needed which is consistent with The Woodlands "in harmony with nature" philosophy.

For more information on The Woodlands Township, please call 281-210-3800 or visit www.thewoodlandstownship-tx.gov.